

From: Justin E. Cooper [mailto:jcooper@ci.pg.ca.us]
Sent: Tuesday, March 07, 2006 9:47 PM
To: MLPAComments@resources.ca.gov
Subject: MLPAComments: A: "Urgent MLPA Recommendation"

Dear Blue Ribbon Task Force Members,

I strongly recommend Package 2 be designated as the preferred alternative. I am strongly opposed to the designated Package S of the Marine Life Protected Areas (MLPA) which segregates protecting critical dive sites within the Monterey Bay Area. I am writing this letter today strongly reflecting my inner values in which all of us have in our lives.

The whole point of a MLPA is to set aside some of the things that we value the most in our lives, and stop the destruction of kelp forests, including the over fishing of our fisheries in areas that provide vital economic and monetary value to the strategic well being of the communities in which they truly belong to. I truly understand this is an issue that is overwhelming, and does touch many user groups. All user groups sacrifice in the long run to better the communities in which they serve. My father, Edward Cooper made a point to try and protect such areas which all started back in 1990 designated as the Ed Ricketts Underwater Park. He spent the rest of his life until he passed away in 2003 trying to instill the great vision of an area set aside from all forms of extractive measures.

My father also once said, "Just like a rain forest of value, and similar in many aspects, a beautiful kelp forest is similar. We do not kill all of the animals or fish; we do not cut all of the trees or kelp, and leave nothing for our future generations to see." Diving, kayaking, tourism, and other water recreational sports need the kelp beds, the sea otters, and the fish. Each one of these animals or plants holds economic value that brings tourism to the Monterey Bay Area. Without them will severely impact this direct vital relationship. I strongly do not want to take the children that I plan on having in the future, to the Monterey Bay Aquarium just to see rockfish and other animals, and to show how they interact. This is something that I want to show my children out in the waters off Lovers Point, and Cannery Row just as my father taught his children.

I feel that divers truly see what is happening under the ocean visually. Due to this my father and many others within the diving community decided to take further actions to try and protect areas of concern for the well being for the majority of the community. My father was a strong voice for the diving community. He believed just as I believe there should be no kelp harvesting, no fishing, and no extractive taking of any plants or animals in the protected zones designated as the "Captain Edward Cooper State Marine Reserve". By allowing extraction of animals and plants within a protected zone undermines the overall concept of such zones. One can say it is a fact that the continued extracting of plants and animals in the areas of the now designated proposed "Captain Edward Cooper State Marine Reserve" undermines these core values of protection that is needed to this area, along with the values that my father and other members of the community sought to protect.

A little back ground about my-self so you can better understand how I grew up for the love of the ocean. I grew up in an amazing world of diving through my father and lived across the street from Lover's Point in Pacific Grove. I have been SCUBA diving since 1996 when I was certified by Mike Guardino through PADI. I have spent many years free diving before I was able to become certified as a SCUBA diver. I do not just view myself as a diver but as someone who loves the ocean like so many other people. I am strongly into surfing, kayaking, sailing, and into any sport related to the ocean. I also have been on the other end of the spectrum fishing and spear fishing for rockfish, and other species. Over the many years diving I have noticed the lack, and depletion of fish species within the areas. I grew up diving at Lovers Point, Coast Guard Pier, and every where in between.

Due to this depletion I have witnessed, just as many others have, it has saddened my heart in ways no one can fully understand. This is why I am not only asking for your support but for your commitment for the true love of the ocean in the Monterey Bay Area in protecting these vital areas, and not letting special interest groups strip away these core values that we truly all believe in. I say No to Package S and Yes to Package 2.

Yes there is a risk, some people will not like the out come, reputations might be hurt, but are we truly going to just watch the degradation of such areas, or are we going to take the full initiative of protecting such areas not for one person but for all users, for our future.

Sincerely,

Justin Edward Cooper